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BRAHMO SAMAJ IN BIHAR IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

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Brahmo Samaj was the first movement for religious reform initiated in India in the nineteenth century under the impact of western education and culture. Its place of origin rightly happened to be Bengal - the state which first came in contact with western education and way of life in a big way. The ideals of Brahmo Samaj stirred the educated Bengali Hindu society. It will be fruitful study if we examine the consequences of the movement in other areas of India in order to understand and appreciate its role and dynamism.

In this connection Bihar is an excellent case study for a variety of reasons. The founder of Brahmo Samaj, Raja Rammohun Roy, had come down to Patna to study Muslim scriptures.[1] He started his career as a sheristadar in the office of the District Commissioner at Ramgarh in Hazaribagh district.[2] Bihar could claim acquaintance with the originator of the movement right from his formative years. Secondly, a number of Bengali Brahmos were always present in Bihar because the Bengalis having received the English education constituted the bureaucracy. They were the doctors, lawyers, teachers and other professional people in the society and had been imported by

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1. Sastri, Pandit Sivanath, "Rammohun Roy : the story of his life", The Father of Modern India Commemoration Volume of the Rammohun Roy Centenery Celeberations, Calcutta, 1933, (Centenery Publicity Booklet-1), p.9.

2. Diwakar, R.R. (ed), Bihar through the Ages, 1958, p.677.

the English to serve the needs of administration. In other words, Brahmos came down to Bihar in the course of their professional duties. These distinctive traits add to the significance of the study of Brahmo Samaj in Bihar in the second half of the nineteenth century.

Since the Bengalis have been coming to Bihar continuously it is difficult to state precisely as to when the first Brahmos entered Bihar. However, as the second-half of the nineteenth century unfolded itself, they were to be found in the chief urban centres of the Province. Thus, Brahmo Samaj was established at Hazaribagh in 1867.[3] In 1870, on the request of the Brahmos of Monghyr, the government granted them a piece of land measuring one bigha for the construction of a place of worship.[4] The reason for the Brahmo population of the town was the existence of the Railway workshop at Jamalpur and the gun factory in Monghyr which necessarily required the services of technically skilled and English educated Indians, who for historic and geographical reasons usually came from Bengal.

Another indication of the spread of the Brahmos in Bihar can be had from the fact that Keshub Chunder Sen, the great leader of Brahmo Samaj, entered into correspondence with the government with regard to providing facilities for

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3. Sen, Punyamoy, "Hundred years of Hazaribagh Brahmo Samaj", The Searchlight, (Patna) April 30, 1967.

4. Land Revenue Progs. A; No.48, May 1870; 49, May 1870; 59, August 1870; 63, April 1871 and 64, April 1871.

registration of the marriages of the Brahmos in 1872.[5] The government agreed. On June 4, 1872 they issued a notification laying down detailed rules for the registration of Brahmo marriages.[6] This was evidently necessary because Brahmo followers in Bihar were encountering difficulties in following their customs.

The fact that Brahmo families could be found in all important places in Bihar can be inferred from the appointment of Registrars for solemnising Brahmo marriages subsequently. In 1886 the Sub-Registrar of Motihari Sadar was appointed as an ex-officio Registrar for the Champaran district.[7] Mr. C. Shanne, Bar-at-law, became a Marriage Registrar in Monghyr after the death of Babu Mohendra Nath Roy in 1900.[8] Babu Jay Kali Datta was appointed as the Registrar for Ranchi by a notification of 1901.[9] Babu Kshetra Nath Ghosh of Deoghur became the Registrar for the district of Santhal parganas in 1904.[10] Babu Tin Couree Bose, the Secretary of Brahmo Samaj, Giridih, a Sub-divisional town in Hazaribagh district, requested the Inspector-General of Registration of Bengal in 1906 to appoint a permanent Marriage Registrar, because the earlier appointee Babu Umesh Chandra Dutt had been unable to carry on his duty because of ill-health.[11] The government acceeded to his

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5. Ecclesiastical Proceedings, 1-8, June 1872. (Hereafter referred to as Eccl. Progs.)
6. Eccl. Progs. A., 1-8, June 1872.
7. Eccl. File 3, Progs. B, 1-3, June 1886.
8. Eccl. File 3A-2, Progs. B, 3-5, July 1900.
9. Eccl. File 3A-1, Progs. B, 10-12, April 1901.
10. Eccl. File 3A-1, Progs. B, 6-8, October 1904.
11. Eccl. Progs. B, No.1-3, November 1906.

request and allowed the rural Sub Registrar of the Sub-division to function in that capacity.[12] In 1907, two Brahmos from Deoghur, Babu Sukumar Dutt and Babu Satis Chundra requested the Deputy Commissioner of Santhal Parganas to appoint Dr. Fakir Chandra Sadhukhan, L.M.S., as Marriage Registrar in place of Khetra Mohan Ghosh who had left the place due to transfer.[12(a)] Again, Babu Nalin Bihari Gupta, the Vice-Chairman of Dumraon Municipality, was appointed as Marriage Registrar for the purpose of registering a marriage in the family of Babu Brajendra Kumar Basu in 1908.[13]

The Census Report of 1881 noted the presence of Brahmos in Patna.[14] The Census Report of 1901 mentions their existence in almost all the district towns of Bihar.[15] In short, by the end of the nineteenth century, Brahmos could be found in all the important urban centres of Bihar.

The Brahmo Samaj movement seemed to have received great impetus after the visit of Keshub Chunder Sen to Monghyr in 1868.[16] He had left his family there while proceeding on a tour of the North-Western Province. On his return he again stayed in Monghyr. His host was Prosonno Kumar Sen, an employee in the Audit Department

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12. Ibid., Notification No.2573, November 10, 1906.

12(a) Eccl. Progs. B, 75-78, May 1907.

13. Eccl., File 3A-1, Progs. B, 7-9, May 1908.

14. Report on the Census of Bengal, Vol.II, 1881, pp.22-23.

15. Census of India, 1901, Vol. VIA, Bengal Pt.II, p.26.

16. Parekh, M.C., The Brahma Samaj, Kathiawad, 1929, p.92.

of the Eastern Railway.[17] It was under his inspiration that the local Brahmos sought a piece of land from the government and constructed a temple on it in 1872.[18]

It appears that Kesh b Chander Sen's contact with Bihar marked an important phase in the history of Brahmo Samaj in the province. Henceforth, intensive efforts were made to propagate the teachings of the Samaj. Some preachers appear to have made it the mission of their lives to carry the message to a wider audience.

Bhai Dinanath Mozoomdar, a railway employee of Monghyr, resigned his job in 1873 and became a full-time preacher.[19] After 1880 he was given Behar as his special field of service, and was recognised as its local minister.[20] At Bhagalpur he started a 'Prachar-Asram' and successfully brought a number of families within its fold.[21] Later he shifted his field of activity to Patna. When his health failed him, he moved on to Laherisari.

Bhakta Hare Sunder Bose and his nephew Bhai Braj Gopal Niyogi, who was ordained in 1897, took up missionary work on behalf of the Samaj.[22] It appears that the message of Brahmo Samaj failed to evoke a wide response. For example, we find

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17. Niyogy, N., The Apostles and Missionaries of the Navavidhan, Calcutta, (n.d.), P.33.
18. Ibid., p.31
19. Ibid., p.37.
20. Ibid., p. 38.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid., p. 67.

that only one Bihari Hindu, Bhai Baldeo Narain, who was born near Gaya, fell under the spell of Bhakt Hari Sunder Bose while he was preaching at Gaya.[23] He came from an humble family. He was ordained in 1887. He started preaching at Muzaffarpur.[24] But the orthodox Bihari Hindu opinion did not view with favour the propagation of Brahmo ideas. At Muzaffarpur he was garlanded with shoes.[25]

It is interesting to discover the reasons why Brahmo Samaj failed to make an impact on Bihari Hindus. Apparently, the cause was that Bihari Hindus were educationally still backward. Although a string of high schools covered all district headquarters, yet by 1880 there was only one college in Bihar. In the eighties the T.N.J. College (Bhagalpur) and Patna were established. While in the nineties G.B.B.College B.N. College (Muzaffarpur), R.D. & D.J. College (Monghyr) and St. Columba's College (Hazaribagh) were started. If we take a look at the list of successful candidates in B.A. Examination between 1864 and 1886 from the Patna College, we find that 57 Bengali Hindus and 44 non-Bengali Hindus and Muhammadans were on the list.[26] Thus the majority was made up of Bengalis. The Muslims followed them. The Brahmo Samaj, whose main followers were mainly western-educated persons in Bengal, did not thus have a recruiting base. The Bihari

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23. Ibid., p.63
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid.
26. Patna University Golden Jubilee Sovenir, 1970, pp.355-6.

Hindu was unable to appreciate the highly philosophical doctrines of the Brahomo Samaj. Therefore, Arya Samaj with its easily intelligible doctrines became comparatively more popular in the second-half of the nineteenth century in Bihar.

The failure of Brahmo Samaj as a religious movement in Bihar in the second-half of the nineteenth century should not lead us to conclude about its total ineffectiveness. Socially, Brahmo Samaj exercised beneficial influence. The Brahmo Samajists acted as torch-bearers of western education. Many of the teachers in high schools and colleges were Brahmos, The Brahmo Samajists stood for emancipation of womenfolk from traditional handicaps. Their example of allowing the womenfolk to discard Purdah, permitting them to receive education at par with men, certainly set Bihari Hindus rethinking.

The Brahmos themselves tried to popularise female education. Mrs. P.C. Roy opened the first girls' school at Patna in 1891.[27] Under her fostering care as well as the support extended by other Brahmos, the institution developed and pioneered the cause of learning of the girls in the province.

The Brahmos preached widow-remarriage. The orthodox Hindu opinion reacted sharply and Bihar-Bandhu, a Hindi journal,[28] in 1894 sharply criticised them.

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27. Bankipore Girls' High School Magazine (Diamond Jubilee special number), 1958, p. 19.

28. The Behar Bandhu, August 7, 1894.

At least indirectly, the social reform movements amongst the Kayasthas and Bhumihar Brahmans, who were the first to take to western education in Bihar might be traced back to the influence of the Brahmo Samaj.[29]

It was a Brahmo, G.P. Sen, who laid the foundations of English journalism in Bihar by brining out a newspaper, Bihar Herald in 1878 from Patna, Happily the paper is still being published.

Brahmo Samaj also provided a forum for the local intelligentsia to meet on a common platform. Thus Brahmo Samaj in Hazaribagh was established in 1867 as a result of the effort of Sri J.N. Mukherjee himself a non-Brahmo. While he lived, he took keen interest in its functioning.[30]

In short, Brahmo Samaj as a religious movement did not affect the Bihari Hindu community. But as a social movement, it compelled the orthodox section of the population to do some rethinking and revise its social attitudes. The degree of change, however, was still minimal.

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29. The social reform movement among the Kayasthas began in 1889 when the first Kayastha Conference took place at Patna. From 1898 caste conferences of Bhumihar Brahmans also started meeting.

In 1900, a Bhumihar Brahman from Muzaffarpur married according to Brahmo Samaj custom. (Letter to the Editor, The Bihar Times, March 4, 1900).

30. Sen, P., "Hundred years of Hazaribagh Brahmo Samaj", The Searchlight, April 30, 1967.

RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS IN ORISSA IN THE 19TH CENTURY

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Orissa was occupied by the British during the Second Maratha War. By the treaty of Deogaon which was concluded on December 17, 1803, Raghuji Bhonsla ceded to the East India Company "in perpetual sovereignty, the province of Cuttack, including the port and District of Balasore", Raghuji also agreed to confirm certain treaties which had been concluded in the course of the war with his feudatories by the British Government. The feudatory states or 'Garjats' which came under the control of the latter soon after the occupation of Orissa were 16 in number, and they were generally known as the Tributary Mahals of Orissa. Two more 'mahals' were added to the number in 1837. Thus, the three districts of Balasore, Cuttack and Puri on the sea coast and eighteen Tributary Mahals* in the hill regions to the west constituted the British Orissa in the 19th century. The British laws and regulations were not enforced in the Tributary Mahals, and therefore only the three districts in the coastal region were under the direct administration of the British Government. The total area of British Orissa in the 19th century was 23,907 sq. miles of which 16,184 sq. miles were occupied by the Tributary Mahals. The present State of Orissa is, of course,

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*. Tributary Mahals - Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Nilagiri, Dhenkanal, Angul, Daspalla, Talcher, Hindole, Narsinghpur, Tigiria, Baramba, Khandpara, Nayagarh, Ranpur, Athgarh, Banki, Baud and Athmallick.

much larger than the 19th century Orissa as the latter did not include all the Oriya-speaking territories within its jurisdiction. In course of time the British conquest of Orissa brought about certain movements in the religious fields. The nerve-centre of Orissan religion and culture is Lord Jagannath or the 'Lord of the Universe'. He is one of the most famous deities of the Hindus. Pilgrims in large numbers from all parts of India visit his famous Temple at Puri in all seasons. The fame of the Lord and of his Temple were well known to the British long before their conquest of Orissa. The British Government wanted to adopt a very tolerant attitude and a specific policy towards the Temple in order to conciliate the Hindus who constituted almost the entire population of Orissa. Therefore, on August 3, 1803, the Marquis of Wellesley issued strict orders to Lt. Col. Campbell, who commanded the troops for the occupation of Orissa, regarding the Temple.

Wellesley wrote to Campbell[1] : "On your arrival at Jaggarnaut, you will employ every possible precaution to preserve the respect due to the Pagoda, and to the religious prejudices of the Brahmins and pilgrims. You will furnish the Brahmins with such guards as shall afford perfect security to their persons, rites and ceremonials, and to the sanctity of of the religious edifices, and you will strictly enjoin those under your command to observe your orders on this important subject, with the utmost degree of accuracy and vigilance." He rather warned Campbell: "You will understand that no part of the property, contained in the Pagoda of Jaggernaut, or in

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1. M. Martins (ed), Despatches etc. of the Marquis of Wellesley during his Administration in India, Vol. III, pp. 269-70.

any religious edifice, or possessed by any of the priests and Bramins, or persons of any description attached to the temples or religious institutions is to be considered as prize to the army. All such property must be respected as being consecrated to religious use by the customs or prejudices of the Hindoos. No account is to be taken of any such property, nor is any person to be allowed to enter the Pagodas or sacred buildings without the express desire of the Bramins."[2] Wellesley's policy paved the way for a smooth conquest of the Province.

Soon after the conquest, the British authorities adopted a very liberal policy towards the Temple of Jagannath. They tried their best to maintain the Temple in the same manner as it was maintained during the administration of the Maratha Government and incurred necessary expenses for that purpose.[3] The Christian Government did not hesitate to become the 'Churchwarden' of a Hindu deity.

Such a policy had two immediate consequences. First, the people of Orissa in general remained very much satisfied with the British authorities for their patronage of the Temple of their Lord. Secondly, the Christian missionaries began their vehement attack on the religion and culture of the people of Orissa in general and the institution of Jagannath in particular, and they blamed the British authorities for such a liberal policy towards the Temple, which, they believed,

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2. Ibid, p. 270

3. Bengal Revenue Proceedings, No.9 of March 11, 1844, Commissioner of Cuttack to the Sadar Board of Revenue, August 26, 1843.

encouraged idolatrous practices. However, the policy of the British Government remained unchanged for a long time because the people were rather satisfied by their policy. The people, especially the orthodox section, looked down upon the Christian missionaries who vehemently criticised the worship of Jagannath. But the missionaries made sustained efforts to wipe out idolatrous practices and by the end of the first half of the 19th century their labour was fruitful in two directions namely, the dissociation of the Government from the management of the Jagannath Temple and the conversion of some people into Christianity.

In the second half of the 19th century we find the reaction of the people against the preachings of the Christian missionaries and the western culture. On the one hand, the socalled enlightened section accepted Bramho faith which had made much progress by that time in Bengal and on the other hand, an indigenous cult known as 'Mahima Dharma' brought a large number of people into its fold and checked the mass conversion to Christianity.

Now I shall discuss the impact of all these movements in some detail.

MISSIONARY ACTIVITIES IN ORISSA

It must be mentioned in the beginning that no systematic work has been done on the missionary activities in Orissa. Source materials on the topic are scattered throughout the State at the different centres of their activities, and the old journals, newspapers, publications of the missionary press contain enough of new materials on the subject.

The European mind was first awakened by the fearful accounts of the Jagannath Temple, its festivals and customs narrated by Claudius Buchanan, Vice-Provost of the College of Fort William, who visited Orissa in 1806. He gave a horrible picture of the pilgrim and their self immolation under the wheels of the Car of Jagannath. The teachings of Christianity to the pilgrims by distributing copies of the Bible, he believed, would remove such superstitious practices, and he wanted the Government to undertake such measures. But such views went against the adopted policy of the Company's Government. It raised a cry of indignation in England against the Government which tolerated such things.[4] However, the missionary preachings against idolatry in general and the worship of Jagannath in particular did not begin in Orissa until 1823. The Baptist Missionary Society undertook the work at Puri in right earnest because "a blow at Idolatry here" would prove a "blow at the root".[5] They understood that Jagannath or the "Lord of the Universe" drew "national reverence" from the people of India. "Here is the national temple whither the people flock to worship from every province of India." "Here is the Swarga-dwara, the Gate of Heaven, whither thousands of pilgrims came to die, lulled to their last sleep by the roar of the eternal ocean".[6] Such was the estimate of the Lord and the Temple by the Europeans, and this naturally attracted the missionaries to

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4. J.W. Kaye, Christianity in India, p.372.

5. Peggs, A History of the General Baptist Mission, p. 371.

6. Hunter, Orissa Vol. I, p. 84.

the place to work for their cherished desire to abolish idolatry. On February 12, 1822 two missionaries, William Bampton and James Paggs, arrived at Cuttack to begin their activities in Orissa. In July 1823, Bampton visited Puri during the Car Festival and from that time onwards, with characteristic missionary Zeal, he began his activities against idolatry. It was their belief that "Juggernant, the great, the obscene, the bloody Juggernant, must fall; long, perhaps, will be the struggle and fierce the conflict, but he must fall; and the place which knows him now will know him no more for ever".[7]

It was a fierce struggle indeed. The missionaries, on the one hand, fought against the Company's liberal policy and on the other hand, against the superstitous beliefs of the people. They roused public opinion in England,[8] brought the matter before the House of Commons, forced the Court of Director to revise their policy[9] and ultimately compelled the Company to sever the connection with the Temple of Jagannath.[10] In order to bring salvation to the idolatrous Hindus, they began to preach the Gospel, distributed the Bible and other religious pamphlets, established schools, etc. and finally all

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7. Paggs, A History of the General Baptist Mission, p.146.

8. James Paggs(i) India's Cries to British Humanity, Luarie, (ii) Orissa, the Garder of Superstition and Idolatry.

9. (i) Parliamentary Papers, House of Commons, 1837, Vol.43,paper No.357, (ii) Ibid, 1850, Vol.41, Paper No.191, Ibid, 1852, Vol. 69, Paper No. 988.

10. Bengal Revenue Proceedings, No.17, November 5, 1857, Government of Bengal to Board of Revenue, October 30, 1857.

their attempts led some Hindus to embrace Christianity. Incidentally the first Oriya convert was a Brahmin named Gangadhar Sarangi (1828). Soon after the first conversion, the missionaries succeeded to convert more Oriyas, and they were engaged in preaching the Gospel in different parts of the province. The converts established several Christian settlements in Puri, Cuttack, Balasore, Ganjam and Sambalpur, etc. They certainly created a new socio-religious atmosphere and thought themselves to be superior to the Hindus. But the Hindus generally hated and ridiculed them. However, there is no doubt that some thoughtful Hindus now began self-analysis and became conscious of the superstitions in their own religious system. Such searching enquiries in the minds of the Hindus are the basis of the new movements in the Hindu society. In Orissa the new religious movements- the Brahmo Movement and the Mahima Movement - began in the sixties of the 19th century.

BRAHMO MOVEMENT IN ORISSA

No systematic account of the Brahmo Movement in Orissa is available, because no serious research work has been undertaken on the topic. From the old journals sporadic references are found, and I have given a brief sketch of the movement from those sources.[11]

The Bramho preachers visited Orissa frequently and gave lectures to the people regarding their faith and organised 'Upasana' in some places. Many Bengalees were serving at that

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11. The Journals are Utkal Dipika, Sambad Bahika, Sebaka and Naba Sambad. They are available in the office of 'Utkal Sahitya Samaj', Cuttack.

time in different offices and schools in Orissa. They readily came under the influence of the Brahmo preachers and they formed the nucleus of the Bramho movement in Orissa. Professor Haranath Bhattacharya, who was working in the Cuttack College, took the initiative in the formation of a Brahmo Samaj in Orissa. On July 1, 1869, the Utkala Bramho Samaj was established at Cuttack. Many high officials serving in Cuttack and other district headquarters became members of the Samaj. Bhusan Chandra Bhattacharya, Ramnarayan Dutta, Girish Chandra Mitra, Biswanath Banerjee, Ram Kumar Bhattacharya etc. took enough pains to propagate the Bramho ideas. Several schools were established, books and journals (Utkal Subakari, 1869, Dharmabodhini, 1874) were published and 'Bramho Mandir' were raised for the purpose. Bramho preachers visited the Garjat States like Dhenkanal, Talcher, Pallahara, Badamba etc., and they tried their best to bring common people in to their folds. Some prominent Oriyas like Pyari Mohan Acharya, Madhusudan Rao, Biswanath Kar gave their heart and soul for the propagation of the Bramho cult. There is no doubt that the educated people of Orissa in the second half of the 19th century were much inclined to adopt the Bramho faith. Unlike the Bramhos of Bengal they were not divided into different groups because their number was rather small. Though small in number, yet their movement stirred the minds of the people in Orissa who became conscious of the limitations of their socio-religious system.

THE 'MAHIMA' MOVEMENT

As response to the challenge of the Christian missionaries bitter criticism of the Hindu socio-religious system, enlightened Indians took shelter under the anglicised Bramho Movement. The movement was popular among the educated people in general. But the orthodox section and the common people had nothing to do with it. The ordinary Hindu longed to see the appearance of a saint whose utterances would be based on the bedrock of 'realisation' and whose movement would reitalise the traditional Hindu society with a new religious fervour. The appearance of Ramakrishna Paramhansa in Bengal and Jogeswara Mahima Prabhu in Orissa fulfilled such a need.

The 'Mahima' movement is essentially indigenous in character. A large number of people in Orissa became devotees of the cult. It also spread to the neighbouring states like Bengal, Assam and Andhra in course of time. The exponents of this cult never liked the lime light of publicity, and naturally their activities were shrouded in obscurity for a long time. In recent years, several publications[12] have come out on the history, philosophy and teachings of the 'Mahima Dharma'. However, a number of works on 'Mahima Dharma' are still unpublished. They are generally available on palmleaf manuscript forms. The history of this religious movement in all its detail is yet to be compiled on a scientific basis.

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12. Viswa Bharati & the University of Utkal have published works on 'Mahima Dharma (1) Chittaranjan Das, Mahima Dharma of Orissa Viswa Bharati, 1952. (2) Satya Mahima Dharma Pratipadhak, 2 Vols. (3) The Philosophy of Alekh Param Brahma', Utkal University.

The pioneering work on this field is 'Mahima Dharma of Orissa' by Sri Chitta Ranajn Das. He has removed certain grave errors regarding the origin and meaning of this movement, especially the error of N.N.Vasu.[13] I shall briefly discuss the history of the movement in Orissa in the 19th century.

The early history of Mahima Goswami, like many saints, is shrouded in obscurity. He appears for the first time in 1826 at Puri, and gave up his worldly life in 1876 at Joranda (in the Dhenkanal District) which is now regarded as the headquarters of the 'Mahima Movement'. For fifty years, Mahima Goswami lived as a true saint practising Yoga, other forms of austerities and Penances. Slowly a band of devoted followers gathered round him. The principal site of his austerities was Mount Kapilas in the District of Dhenkanal. The first convert to the 'Mahima' cult was Siddha Govinda Babu, and Bhima Bhoi was the first philosopher-poet of the cult, who got the blessings of the Master and composed a large number of philosophical treatises.

Mahima Goswami travelled throughout Orissa and instructed his followers in the worship of 'Alekh Param Bramha'. There were a number of 'Siddhas' of the cult (traditionally there number is 92), who preached its tenets in Orissa and in some neighbouring states. The hallmark of this religious movement was total renunciation on the part of the followers who adopted 'sanyasa'. They were required to travel constantly, to beg not more than one meal from any householder, and not to stay more than one night in any village. They took only one principal meal in the daytime and took nothing in the night.

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13. N.N. Vasu, The Modern Buddhism and its followers in Orissa, published by the Author, 1911.

Even the principal centre of the 'Mahima' cult, Joranda, had no permanent provision for its maintenance. In course of time, the number of followers of the 'Mahima' cult increased considerably and they are now to be found not only in Orissa but also in Andhra, Bengal, Assam, etc. Besides the 'Sanyasis', there are lay devotees and the latter constitutes the bulk of 'Mahima' followers.

Like Brahmos, the followers of the Mahima Dharma believed in the worship and adoration of "the Eternal, Unsearchable and Immutable being who is the Author and Preserver of the Universe". He is 'Alekha' (without description), 'Anakar' (without shape), Anadi (without end). Self-surrender to the 'Param Brahma' or 'Sunya Purusha' is the highest goal of the followers of the 'Mahima' cult. It does not prescribe rigid asceticism but lays stress on disciplined habits to control body and mind. It does not recognise any distinction between caste, creed, colour or any such narrow social division of human beings. Its aim is to unite all on the common platform of 'Sunya Sadhana' or the worship of the 'Void'.

In the 19th century, the Mahima cult spread throughout Orissa and the common people were very much attracted towards it. There is no doubt that it was a powerful force to counteract, on the one hand, the movements of the Christian missionaries, and on the other hand, the appeals of the anglicised Bramho movement. Like the Ramkrishna Mission movement it kindled new hopes in the minds of millions of Hindus who could aspire to find salvation in their own traditional system.

ANTI-BRITISH MOVEMENT IN ORISSA, 1817

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In 1803 the British occupation of Orissa was followed by the establishment of British power and then was introduced a set of new administrative measures not known to the people of Orissa previously. They were British judicial courts, revenue settlements, salt monopoly and a number of rules and regulations pertaining to various aspects of the new administration. Because of their unfamiliarity and ignorance of the details of the local institutions and of the previous Maratha administrative methods, the British were disinclined to retain or even honour any aspects of the indegenous system.[1]

The defect of the new British system was its unsuitableness to the type of environment in which it was applied, and which had a different pattern of its own. The British economic policy, when introduced, led to some popular dissatisfaction, specially in connection with the establishment of the zamindari system and overassessment of lands,[2] with the currency system because of the disturbed ratio of kauris and silver, with the salt monopoly because of the rise in the price of salt,[3] and with the management of the embankments because of its

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1. 13 May 1818, Ever to Government, Bengal Revenue Consultations, 17 July 1818, No.15.

2. 26 November 1818, Trower to Stirling, Bengal Revenue Consultations, 13 May 1819, No.22.

3. 2 May 1817, Impey to Government, Bengal Criminal Judicial Consultations, L.P., 23 May 1818, No.1.

corruption. In the judicial affairs the access to civil justice was tedious and difficult to all classes of the people because the people knew nothing of such rules and regulations.[4] A type of new bureaucratic machinery was developing which was "corrupt and extortionate to a degree."[5] The administration of the criminal justice was also attended with vexation and difficulties to prosecutors and witnesses and hardship to the innocent prisoners, as previously, unlike under the British procedure, a complainant, without going through a process of regular formalities, had access even to the highest judicial authority and could readily get addressed his grievances without much unnecessary expenditure.

Thus the British system which suffered from inadequacies and deficiencies and which failed to adapt to the new atmosphere with a different historical background and habits of the people, prepared the way for what may be called an anti-British movement, for all to be mobilised by the conservative forces. This movement received strength from various sections of the people who lost their prominence during the new British rule or faced economic hardship in some way or the other. Firstly, the Raja of Khurda, who was dispossessed of his Khurda territory and was imprisoned for

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4. 13 May 1818, Ewer to Government, Bengal Revenue Consultations, 17 July 1818, No.15; 19 July 1820, Court of Directors to the Governor General in Council, Judicial Letters to Bengal, 1820, Vol.V, pp.522-4.

5. 28 September 1816, Watson to Nizamat Adalat, Bengal Criminal Judicial Consultations, L.P., 7 February 1817, No.37.

sometime, was later on merely appointed as the superintendent of the temple of Jagannath although other Rajas who rebelled against the British at that time were restored to their original territories.[6] Therefore, the Raja of Khurda remained dissatisfied with the British. Although he himself did not come forward to lead the anti-British movement, yet there is evidence to show that his back-door policy gave enough moral support to those who were the protagonists of such an agitation. Secondly, the worst-affected people in Orissa were the local militia class, who previously being enrolled in the army of the Raja of Khurda or elsewhere could maintain some social status and earn a decent livelihood. But the British did not require their services. With the dissolution of the unrequired militia, a good number of people lost their profession and also thereby their means of livelihood.[7] Thirdly, the religious communities, more particularly the orthodox Hindus, did not look towards the new Christian Government with favour. Again the disassociation of the British administration with the management of the temple of Jagannath and the criticism of the worship of Lord Jagannath by some

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6. 24 December 1804, Harcourt to Shawe, Add. MSS. 13610, p.193; 16 May 1805, Government to Harcourt, Bengal Secret and Political Consultations, 16 May 1805, No.405.

7. 13 May 1818, Ewer to Government, Bengal Revenue Consultations, 17 July 1818, No.15.

Christian missionaries in Orissa,[8] at least gave the impression to many that the British were different from the Marathas who actively patronized the Jagannath Temple and encouraged some Gosains and Brahmins by their donation and favour. Therefore, inspite of the utmost measures taken by the British not to wound the religious suceptibilities of the Brahmins, the conservative Brahmins had no sympathy with the new rule[9] and many Pandas were prepared to stretch their hands to any anti British movement. Fourthly, the new bureaucracy the British instituted, in a society ignorant of their regulations, simply granted almost unlimited power to the Amlas who, for their selfish interest, could unscrupulously manage to deprive many original proprietors of their estates. The loss sustained by the proprietors was irrepairable, and they were reduced to abject poverty and grew desperate to join with anyone that would see to the rapid elimination of British power.[10] Fifthly, the British introduced annual settlements for some period and overassessed the land and imposed the land revenue at a higher rate, which the cultivator was not in a position to pay. This

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8. Periodical Accounts of the Baptist Missionary Society, Vol. IV, p.448.

9. In an unpublished Oriya Manuscript "Firingi Kali Bharat", written by Madhusudan Bipra (1834-35), the British in Orissa have been called as Asuras or Mlechhas. The use of such contemptuous words is indicative of the dissatisfaction with the Christian rule. This manuscript is important from the historical point of view.

10. Out of 2,340 Original proprietors whose names were registered in the first settlement for the revenue of Cuttack(Orissa), only 1,448 remained at the end of 1816. 23 May 1817, Trower to Board of Revenue, Bengal Revenue Consultations, 24 October 1817, No.38; 13 May 1818, Ever to Government, Bengal Revenue Consultations, 17 July 1818, No.15.

overassessment brought dissatisfaction to almost all on whom the burden of the land tax fell.[11]

The disaffection and discontent of the various sections of the people, as mentioned above, contributed to the rise of an anti-British movement. But these did not give rise to a rebellion or receive a political shape, till the leadership was given by a person of consequence, popularly known in Orissa as Boxi Jagabandhu Bidyadhar Bhramarbar Ray. The immediate cause of the rebellion was that he was unjustly and in an unscrupulous way deprived of his estate through the mischief and villainy of some Amlas,[12] Jagabandhu repeatedly protested against this and even presented a petition to the British authority for the restoration of his estate but in vain.[13] Against this injustice he reacted very violently. He came forward to champion the cause of the persons who suffered under the British and were ready to follow him in his anti-British agitation. The cause for which he stood has been told in his own words as follows:

"The inhabitants .... have sustained in the Mofussul a

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11. 19 July 1820, Court of Directors to Governor General in Council, Judicial Letters to Bengal 1820, Vol.V, pp.342 & 350; 23 May 1817, Trower to Board of Revenue, Bengal Revenue Consultations, 24 October 1817, No.38.

12. Jagabandhu Bidyadhar Mahapatra Bhramarbar Ray, popularly known as Jagabandhu, inherited the office of the Bakhshi, the Military Commander of the Raja of Khurda. He was next to the Raja, both in rank and authority, because of his influence over the military of the country. He was regarded by the Gajapati Rajas and the people of Mughalbandi as second to the representative of the ancient royal family of Orissa. He had matrimonial alliances with the Raja of Shergarh on Ghumsar frontier and the Raja of Baramba in Orissa. 13 May 1818, Ewer to Government, Bengal Revenue Consultations, 17 July 1818 No.15.

13. 14 January 1814, Richardson to Government, Bengal Revenue Consultations, 29 January 1814, No.35; 13 May 1818 Ewer to Government, Bengal Revenue Consultations, 17 July 1818, No.15.

variety of injuries and oppressions, ...as an instance of which a seer of salt which used to be sold for 1 Pun of cowries cannot at present be procured for 12 Puns, moreover where one rupee was once taken on account of revenue ten are now exacted and after all there are after [sic ? often] demands and balances. By the injustice of the judges, the oppression of the wicked thanadars and the tyranny of the officers of salt mahals, the people are altogether overwhelmed and being unable to leave their beloved native lands are grown desperate and careless of life. They have accordingly with the intention to avenge their injuries appointed me Jugbandhoo Bhomebur their leader"..[14]

Now, Jagabandhu at the head of the insurgents prepared his objectives which suggested the elimination of foreign rule, restoration of the Raja of Puri's Bower (formerly Raja of Khurda to the territory of Orissa, reinstatement of the original proprietors on their former estates and redress of all the grievances confronted by the people under the British rule.

The rebellion started in Khurda in the last week of March 1817 and soon the whole of this region was in the grip of the rebels. Then it spread to Puri and there was response to it from a large part of the coastal region including the territories of the Raja of Kujang and Kanika. In this rebellion, Pandas, Malangis, dispossessed zamindars and many other people joined hands with the rebels. As a result, the British power

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14. Encl. 15 July 1817, C.A. Molony, Persian Secretary to Government, Bengal Revenue Consultations, 24 Oct. 1817, No.49(A letter of 26 April 1817 from the Raja of Khurda to Government).

was eliminated for sometime from Khurda and Puri and from certain regions adjacent to Cuttack[15] and the British position even at Cuttack was found to be critical.

One of the peculiar characteristics of the rebellion was that the main point of attack of the insurgents was the government offices. Rebels plundered or burnt the treasuries or the Kacheris of the Tahsildars and other officers at Banpur, Khurda and other places. It is stated "that no Houses were destroyed, no property plundered and no one individual touched excepting those connected with government."[16]

This anti-British movement could not succeed principally because of the superior military power of the British. They brought the Bengal artillery to assist the British soldiers at Cuttack who had now been employed for fighting against the rebels.[17]

Secondly, the lack of unity further weakened the position of the insurgents. Though most of the people in Puri and Khurda enthusiastically joined the movement, yet there was no satisfactory response from the Balasore region or many parts of

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15. 29 March 1817, Impey to Government, Bengal Criminal Jidicial Consultations, L.P., 11 April 1817, No.1; 10 April 1817, Impey to Government, Bengal Criminal Judicial Consultations, L.P.,12 August 1817 No.11; 15 April 1817, Impey to Government, Bengal Criminal Judicial Consultations, L.P., 12 August 1817, No.15; 14 June 1817, Impey to Government, Bengal Criminal Judicial Consultations, L.P., August 1817, No.31-A.

16. 30 March 1817, Impey to Government, Bengal Criminal Judicial Consultations, L.P., 11 April 1817, No.3.

17. 8 April 1817, Government to Impey, Bengal Criminal Judicial Consultations, L.P., 11 April 1817, No.12; 29 February, Stirling to Government, Bengal Revenue Consultations, 19 May 1820, No.25.

Cuttack region. Many Garjat Rajas kept themselves aloof or were sometimes sympathetic towards the British. Thirdly, the military resources of the rebels were limited and the soldiers hastily recruited from here and there were mostly untrained ones.

With the arrival of the reinforcement from Bengal, the British succeeded in repelling the attack of the rebels who were defeated and put to flight. Their leader, Bidyadhar, was made a prisoner at Cuttack for the rest of his life.[18]

Thus, the rebellion of 1817 was a failure, but the cause for which Jagabandhu fought and was imprisoned for life at last triumphed. Most of the grievances, about which Jagabandhu complained, received due consideration at the hands of the British administration. The enquiry which was made into the causes of the rebellion revealed many flaws in the British system and reforms were accordingly introduced for removing the grievances of the people and to improve the morale of the administration, more condusive to the interest of the people rather than to the exclusive interest of the British only. In other words, estates were restored to the original holders,

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18. 4 September 1823, Government to Commissioner of Cuttack, Bengal Criminal Judicial Consultation, L.P., 4 September 1823 No.22; 4 June 1825, Commissioner of Cuttack to Government, Bengal Criminal Judicial Consultations, L.P., 16 June 1825, No.9; Resolution, 28 April 1826, Bengal Criminal Judicial Consultations, L.P., 28 April 1829, No.27.

the landed aristocracy was reinstated, the jama of the country was reduced, the reduction of the jama helped in restoring the disturbed ratio of Kauries and silver, more salt was supplied, the price of salt was lowered, and adequate measures were taken to remove corruption in the management of embankments.[19]

19. 13 May 1818, Ewer to Government, Bengal Revenue Consultations, 17 July 1818, No.15; 29 February 1820, Stirling to Government, Bengal Revenue Consultations, 19 May 1820, No.25.

POLITICO - RELIGIOUS UPSURGE IN BAMMANGHATTEE PARGANNAH IN 1866-67 A.D.

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The subject matter of this paper is an assessment of the rebellion of Boorda Bhoomiz and Bhagwan Doss in Pargana Bamanghatti in 1866 A.D., when they used religion and ethnic background to ostracise Raja's men and other Hindus from their area. Then nineteenth century has been one of the most creative periodsin Indian History when India underwent enlightenment and political awakening, which in their turn gave birth to a new resurgent nation. But in their own way thoroughly unconnected people in most preliterate societies also responded to the atmosphere of resurgency. The object of this paper is to highlight the main facets of the state of resurgency in the parganas of Bamanghatti and its neighbouring elaka Koosoombhnd in pargannah Ooperbhag falling in Tributary Mahals, now in the state of Orissa. The account is based on the few old correspondences between 1866-71 in the Record Room of Singhbhum now preserved in the State Central Record Office, Patna.

Genesis of the Rebellion

The rebellion in Bamanghatti Pargannah was the result of distinct universal discontent prevailing in the area against the Raja's rule so much so that it was assessed by the T.E. Ravenshaw, Officiating Superintendent of Tributary Mahals, Cuttack, and Dr. Hayes, Deputy Commissioner, Singhbhum that

it was "impossible in the then state of feeling of the people to allow the Rajah to exercise any authority in Bamanghatti until such time as a settlement of rents was made and confidence restored."[1]

After the Sumbalpore rebellion in 1861, the Raja of Bammanghatti attempted to introduce a settlement and measurement of lands which were "eminently distasteful to the indigenous population who adhered to the old custom of payment as so much per hal of 40 or about 40 Bighas of land". Had the measurements been carried out with anything like fairness the people might possibly have yielded, but the Raja's Amins falsified their measurements, and his Omlahs and tehsildars did not give receipts in full for rents paid. When objections and complaints were made, the people were put off with excuses, and no attempt was made to adjust or settle their real or forced grievances. The Raja's subordinates, moreover, committed numberless oppressions and exactions and made themselves otherwise obnoxious.

These Ammens had been accompanied by their servants and friends paiks, muqdees, choubers, pole bearers and followers who had lived on the people and committed endless oppressions.

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1. From T.E.Ravenshaw, Officiating Superintendent, Tributory Mahal, to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, Fort William, dated Camp Deodang Mohurbhunge in Bamanghatti, the 28th April 1866.

Moreover, having been only nominally paid by the prince, they had in many instances to secure their own profits by measuring lands at double their actual area.

Repeated additions had been made to their rents and the Abwabs and miscellaneous demands had been levied to such an extent as to leave the cultivators only a bare subsistence. No system of accounts were kept and seldom were any receipts granted for payments made.

To make confusion worse confounded no regular system of collection was followed. Tunkees[2] or assignments of revenue were given by the Rajah and his Omlah and the village headmen sometimes made payments to one person and occassionally to another. Syces, tailors, merchants, servants etc. received these Tunkees and were left to collect the amount from the unfortunate raiyats. Occasionally an elephant was quartered in village, and the demand for gratious supplies for all the Raja's Omla on the spot were constant and heavy and were extracted without moderation or mercy. There was no protection offered to the raiyats and they were harassed. Under these circumstances the people were reduced to desperation.[3]

The apparent cause of the rising was that four of the Sirdars were seized, bound on an elephant and carried off to Bareepudda for refusing to supply rassuds or provision to the Raja's local agents. Sirdars were the heads of peers or divisions into which a pergannah was divided. The freedom

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2. Ibid.

3. From R.E.Ravenshaw, Officiating Superintendent, Tributory Mehals, Cuttack, to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, Dated Cuttack, 31st May 1866.

loving people passed their mirthful days in commune like village or patti system and the bond of allegiance to the Raja was very slight. They were a splendid fighting race and the Rajas made full use of them as pawns in a game in their quarrels with each other. They were ready to follow the local Rajas when they led them out to battle, perhaps because of the lure of booty than anything else.

Thus, with such loose bond of allegiance, the persistent attempt of superior landlord to reduce them to obedience was bound to be galling and abnoxious. They priced their liberty more than their life and they respected their heads (Sirdars) and their rule, because they had the backing of traditions and their obedience to such system was habitual. The Sirdars administered the peers in arcadian simplicity without becoming tyrants, and they were the most respected guardians of the tribals.

There had been some jealousy between the Coles and other sections of the Sudras who acquired lands or property in their village. An idea appears to have prevailed that the Coles, Santhals and Bhoomiz should retain exclusive possession of the country.[4]

The Rising

We have seen that the Sirdars were the most respected persons in their respective peers. When the four Sirdars were seized, bound on an elephant and carried off to Bareebudda

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4. From T.E. Ravenshaw, Offg., Superintendent, Tributory Mehal, Cuttacks to the Secy. to the Government of Bengal, Fort William, Dt. Camp Deodang, Moyurbhunj, in Bamanghattee, the 28th April 1866.

it became intolerable for the people. It appears that they were much incensed at their headmen having been bound and carried off and retaliated by driving the Rajh's police and every one belonging to him out of Bahalda.[5] The Raja took no measures either to conciliate the people or to maintain his authority. Dacoities commenced at night and were succeeded by day plunderings which continued for nearly a month, during which time the Raja afforded no information whatever on the subject. The first intelligence of the disorganised state of Bamunghattee was received through the Deputy Commissioner of Singhbhum.

As these dacoities and plunderings continued, the entire Sudro population left the country. The plunderers organised themselves under the leadership of Boorda Bhoomiz, a man of no previous notoriety, but who appeared to have taken advantage of the opportunity to bring himself to power. Boorda Bhoomiz, Bhugwan Doss, Kartika Cole, Tolkar Santhal and Chikra Cole were the chief ringleaders and instigators of the rising. They assumed the command of the country. Meetings were held at first by all the Ooperbhag Sirdars of Peers and also those of Bamanghattee from whence a deputation was sent to Ooperabhag and Bhagwan and several of the Sirdars crossed the Ghauts and went over to Bamanghattee.[6]

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5. Ibid

6. From T.E. Ravenshaw, Offg. Superintendent, Tributory Mehals, Cuttack, to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, dated Cuttack, 31st May 1866.

It was not precisely known as to what transpired at the Bamanghattee Conference, but it was generally stated that it was agreed to reinstate the old Sirdars or Zamindars of Pergunnahs Bammenghatee, Opperbhag, Juspore and its subordinate five peers and to coerce the Rajah into measures which might be productive of less misery and oppression. Considerable bodies of men assembled, attempts were made to negotiate with the Raja's nephew, who was at the time in Bamanghatee. He appears to have offered concessions, but he acted somewhat injudiciously in causing the arrest of two or three of Bamanghatee Sirdars who had wounded his servants. Those Sirdars were later released at Baripuda, but they retaliated by turning out the Raja's people.

The pergunnah was divided into several peers of groups of villages and each peer was presided over by a Sirdar or headman. These headmen were originally either Boorahu or Santhals who as aboriginal inhabitants of the country, claimed a sort of undefined and hereditory right in the soil, and had always objected to, if not resisted, the introduction of Hindoo Hattooahs, Gwallas, Chassas, Mahantees, etc. The Rajah had at various times and for various causes, whether on good grounds or otherwise, gradually introduced and favoured the settlement of Hinduo castes and cultivators and had made grants of lands to Brahmins and temples, which though not resisted, or perhaps openly objected to, had been very distasteful to the Deslog, Boorhaus and Santals. The local names of the classes were Hatooahs and deslog. The former including all Hindoo Gwallas, Chassas and Soodras, and the latter Boorhus Coles, Bhoomiz and the indigenous population.[7]

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7. Ibid.

For sometime before open plundering commenced Ooperbhag, dacoites were night occurances, the victims being invariably Hatooahs. It was rumoured that Hatooahs would be openly plundered and molested and the Deslog would be spared. At this Hatooahs commenced to remove large quantities of their grain in the houses of their former servants belonging to deslog castes for safe custody.[8] Complete panic prevailed and people sent deputations to Bhugwan's son and agents at Bunkatti offering to pay blackmail in consideration of their houses being spared. In some cases payment was voluntary but in others it was exacted by Bhugwan's sons and agents. In every instance where protection on payment[9] was promised, an arrow and a string with three knots were given to the person to be protected with instructions to be hung up in front of their houses. At the same time a bamboo with a bundle of straw tied at the top was to be planted in front of the door. Similar tokens were used in Bamanghatee also. They had started a government of their own; they issued written orders to the headmen of villages and directed plundering operations. A state of great consternation prevailed.

The houses of Deslog were not disturbed and in a very few cases the houses of Coles, Santhals and Bhoomiz were plundered. The distinguishing marks of a pole of bundle of rice were placed before the houses of Deslog and thus their houses were protected.

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8. Ibid.,

9. Ibid..

Boorda Bhoomij, it appears, had no particular headquarters. He carried a large broad arrow to which Poojah was offered,[10] and this was the standard round which the malcontents rallied. The offering of Poojah to the broad arrow of Boorda Bhoomiz gave this leader a charismatic personality. Through this system of worship he not only secured the allegiance of the tribal people under his banner but was also successful in commenting his adherents together by evoking a feeling that his followers were the Deslog and other were Hatooah, a sense of "we-group" and "they-group". Other instances of use of religion as a vehicle of separation have not been wanting in the annals of the tribals.

In the whole rebellion, the personality of Bhagwan Doss, considered to be the descendant of the head Boorhau family of the pergannah, is interesting. His ancestors are said to have held the Zamindary of Bamanghatee pergannah. When they were deposed, they settled in Opperbhag, where the grandfather of Bhugwan obtained the post of Suberakar or Manager of the Pergannah. This continued in the family till his father was turned out with the consent of the Superintendent of Tributory Mehal for misconduct, open resistance to the Rajah, embezzlement of revenue etc. - Bhagwan Doss, however, succeeded in obtaining from the then Raja of few villages as his maintenance and Jagheer and amassed some property. He was a shrewd intelligent man. As the Raja's oppression increased Bhagwan availed

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10. From Officiating Superintendent, Tributory Mehals, Cuttack, to the Secretary to the Govt. of Bengal, Fort William, Dt. Camp Deodang, Mohurbhung in Bamanghattee, the 28th April 1866.

himself[11] of the opportunity to intrigue and foster the prevailing discontent with a view to induce a crisis, so that he might again obtain the position he had formerly occupied as not only the head of the clan but as the zamindar of the pergunnah.

The ambition of Bhagwan Doss was inextricably mixed up with the whole proceeding of plundering and dacoities and he took advantage of the situation created due to general discontent. The result was that Boorda Bhoomiz remained a cipher, getting worship and adoration in the assemblege of his adherents while the whole movement was skillfully operated by Bhagwan Doss, his sons and his agents for the satisfaction of their selfish ends.

Kashee Sirdar of Koosoombund[12] as head of peers commenced an investigation and succeeded in arresting a number of dacoits and recovered from them considerable portion of the plunder. Those dacoits confessed to Kashee Sardar that they had orders to plunder from Bhagwan and implicated two of his sons and several of his adherents. Kashee Sardar prepared a report of the case and as was his duty, proceeded to take his prisoners to the Rajah at Barripudda. But Bhugwan's sons and adherents waylaid Kasse Sirdar, rescued his prisoners and forcibly carried off the whole of his papers. Bhagwan from Bamanghatee sent armed pykes under his son Muddun Babu to arrest Kashee Sirdar.

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11. From the Officiating Superintendent, Tributory Mehal, Cuttack, to the Secretary to the Govt. of Bengal, Dt.Cuttack, 31st May 1866.

12. Ibid.,

Kasee managed to escape, but the pykes kept guard over the premises until later in the day when a party of some 400 or 500 of the Bamanghatee plunderers headed by two notorious dacoits known as Nouru and Deeba Coles and Bhugwan's gomasta arrived, having plundered another village on the way. Kasee Sirdar's house and those of the Hatooahs in his village of Kusumbund were completely plundered. The Bamanghtee plunderers were joined by a large number of the Deslog in Ooperbhag, and the party for some days laid waste some of the most prosperous villages in the Pergunnah. During the time these plundering were going on, most of the Hatooah either fled or hid in the jungle, and in their absence all the property they had previously concealed was hunted up and carried off, the major portion finding its way to Bhugwan's house at Bunkatti.

Baboo Kishan Chunder Bhunje was sent by the Rajah with a good number of pyks. They came upon the plunderers at Mouzah Moonda Kotta. Seing his party approach there was a general panic among the plunderers, who fled in all directions. The ringleaders escaped; only a few of the rebels including women and children to the number of 70 were arrested and sent captives to Baripada on 30th March. The Rajah also reached Copperabhag but he had no courage to go to Bamanghatee.

Having heard of the trouble Dr. Hayes,[13] the Deputy Commissioner of Singhbhum, entered Bamanghatee on the 17th April 1866. He found that all Sudro population i.e. other than the

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13. From T.F.Ravenshaw, Offg. Supdt., Tributory Mehal, Cuttak, to the Secretary to the Govt. of Bengal, Dt. Camp Deodang, Mohurbhunge in Bamanghatee, the 28th April 1866.

Santhals, Coles, and Bhoomiz were in state of the greatest consternation, having been plundered and turned out of their homes and villages. The only course open to Dr.Hayes was to take effective steps to-alley the fear which had been created and make the Sudro population return quietly to their villages. The next thing was to attempt to procure restoration of the plundered property. This was carried out in a great measure with the assistance of the Santhals, Coles and Bhumiz themselves. At last Dr. Hayes was successful in seizing the Bhugwan Doss, Kartika Cole, Boorda Bhoomiz, Tolka Santhal and Chirka Cole and other leaders of the revolt, and they were removed to Cheybassa Jail to face trial.

Seeing their leaders removed, most of the people gave valuable information and assistance in recovering plundered property and in many instances readily disgorged their share in the spoil. Dr. Hayes dealt the situation very tactfully for which he earned the Lieutenant Governor's appreciation.[14] But Rovenshaw had a different experience in Ooperbhag Pergunnah where he laboured under considerable difficulty owing to the great influence possessed by Bhugwan and his partisans and the utter and entire absence of the smallest appearance of authority on the part of the Raja. Even the bitter hatred of his oppressive Omlah did not suffice to induce the people to give any information as they dreaded their vengeance to follow after they left the place.

The losses assessed amounted to Rs. 12,267-13-10.

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14. Political Department (Resolution) Fort William, dated 11th June 1870.

Result of the rising

In consultation with Dr. Hayes a new scheme in the territory was initiated. The Raja's authority in Bamangh ty was suspended and Dr. Hayes was vested with the same civil and criminal powers in Bamanghatty as those he exercised in Singhbhum.[15]

Under section 15 of Act V of 1861 a force of 1 sub-Inspector and 8 constables was quartered on Bamanghatteegarh, and the cost was to be recovered from the Raja of Mohurbhanj.

The Sirdar or headman of each peer was permitted to exercise police powers under the guidance of Dr.Hayes. An enquiry was instituted. All the Sirdars of peers and hereditary heads of villages were to be maintained in their position; where they had been improperly ousted in near past they were to be restored.

Settlement for all villages was to be made under written agreements with the village headmen, who were to be responsible to the Sirdars of their respective peers for rents. It was also decided to discontinue the attempt to assess lands by measurements and the old system of halbundee was reverted. A fair enquiry was to be made where necessary as to the number and extent of hals held by individual cultivators. The standard of measurement was fixed at Rs.54 per hal. All awabs and mangan were abolished. It was agreed that the Rajah should give an undertaking not to demand as cess whatever beyond the fixed and proper rents [illegible].

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15. From the Secretary to the Govt. of Bengal to the Officiating Superintendent of Tributory Mehal of Cuttack, Dt. Darjeeling the 14th May 1866.

proper rents before his estate was made over to him.[16]

In Ooperbhag pergunnah also the management was entrusted to Baboo Kisen Chunder Bhuje, the Raja's nephew. Land was to be properly classified and assessed and rates of rent of first, second and third quality of rice land were fixed at one rupee, annas twelve and eight per bigha respectively.

It was also decided to conclude a lease for 10 years on the above rates with the Sirdars of Peers, who were to be responsible for the collection of rents in their respective peers and also were to perform all police duties. The Sirdars were to forward the kist of revenue direct to the Raja's treasury.

The system of tunkees or assignments of revenue was discontinued and so also the demand of Awabs.

A party of police with one head constable and six constables was posted at Bunkatti for preservation of peace.

Nature of Rising and conclusion

Thus we have seen that this upsurge was an attempt to change the prevailing system of administration perpetrated by the Raja's unjust officials. We have found the phenomenon of prejudice, tension and discrimination between groups on ethnic and racial grounds. We have also found that religion and ethnic backgrounds were used between Deslog and Hatooahs successfully in this upsurge.

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16. From Officiating Superintendent Tributary Mehals of Cuttack to the Secretary to the Govt. of Bengal, Fort William, Dt. Deodang, Mohurbhange in Bamanghatee, the 28th April 1866.

In these circumstances we find that this rebellion comes in the category of other tribal rebellions like the Great Kole Rising, Santal Hul, Kherwar Movement, etc. Religion was used in this revitalization movement in the same manner as in the Birsa Movement. The leadership is charismatic as we find Boorda Bhoomiz getting the Deslog worship the broad arrow; Deslog. In Bhugwan Doss we find a shrewd politician trying to utilize every opportunity for aggrandisement of his own. We also find that in this duality of leadership, the followers got easily disillusioned at the slightest show of strength; all the rebels melted away at the very sight of the Raja's army under his nephew. But nonetheless this rebellion abounds in many administrative lessons which we can hardly afford to ignore.

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GLOSSARY

Bighas	-	Land measurement, about 2½ bighas make an acre
Omlas	-	Servant to run zamindary establishment
Amins	-	Officer who measured land
Tehsildar	-	Officer who collected land revenue
Paiks	-	Armed constables
Nugdees	-	Paid servants
Abwabs	-	Cess
Tunkees	-	Assignment of revenue
Syces	-	Grooms
Sirdars	-	Headmen of a group of villages called peer
Peers	-	Territorial grouping of ten to twelve villages
Ghauts	-	Mountaindus passes
Pergannah	-	Bigger territorial unit comprising a large number of villages
Hatooahs	-	Hindus, Gwallas, Chassas, Soodras
Deslog	-	Indigenous population of Bhoomiz Santals and Coles
Gwallas	-	A Hindi subcaste of Herdsmen
Chassas	-	Cultivating labourers, a lower Hindu subcaste
Mahautees	-	A subcaste of Orriya Hindu
Poojah	-	Worship
Suberkar	-	Managership
Jagheer	-	A tenancy in lieu of service
Goomasta	-	Zamindar's servant to run revenue administration
Hal	-	Plough
Halbundi	-	Unit of rent
Kist	-	Instalment